

# COUNTY OF YORK

## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** April 18, 2002 (BOS Mtg. 5/7/02)

**TO:** York County Board of Supervisors

**FROM:** James O. McReynolds, County Administrator

**SUBJECT:** Main Street Pedestrians-Only Designation

As the Board is aware, Main Street is closed to vehicular traffic on a daily basis from April through October in an effort to enhance its safety and attractiveness for visitors to various shops and attractions. With VDOT's permission and approval, this pedestrians-only program has been in place since 1992 and has been well received by residents, businesses and visitors. The barricades used to restrict traffic from the designated segment of the street (Comte de Grasse to Church Street) are placed and removed on a daily basis through a cooperative arrangement between the County and the National Park Service. Current hours for this pedestrian-only limitation are from approximately 8:00 am to 6:00 pm.

With the attractiveness of Yorktown as a visitor destination increasing, there is a corresponding increase in pedestrian traffic on Main Street. This activity does not end at 6:00 pm when the barricades are currently removed. In fact, on nice-weather evenings residents and visitors alike continue to walk along Main Street and the extended operating hours for the Yorktown Trolley may encourage further evening visitation along Main Street.

In addition, as the Board is aware, a new business venture (Yorktown River Ride and Candlelight Walking Tours) will soon begin offering evening walking tours along the Comte de Grasse to Church Street segment of Main Street. This activity will provide increased visitation and exposure to Yorktown. The operators have requested that consideration be given to extending the Main Street closure to as late as 10:00 pm to safely accommodate the pedestrians associated with their narrated walking tours.

Several years ago, the County received permission from VDOT to extend the hours of the pedestrians-only system to dusk. For various reasons, including low pedestrian usage and the inability of the NPS to staff a later barricade removal effort, this authorization has not been implemented. However, for the reasons described above and because the River Ride and Candlelight Walking Tour staff will be available to remove the barricades at the conclusion of the evening tours, the extended closure now appears to be worthy of consideration.

A summary description of the River Ride/Walking Tour operation is attached. As you will notice, the tours will be offered five days per week (Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday evenings). The walking tour portion of the activity would conclude between approximately 9:00 and 10:00 pm, depending on whether a 9:00 pm cruise is offered. This variable schedule would be impossible for the County or the NPS to staff; however, the walking tour operator will be able to do so with their personnel. On the other two nights of the week (Wednesday and Saturday), I believe the current schedule (8:00 am to 6:00 pm) should remain in effect.

It should be noted that the traffic circulation impacts of the Main Street pedestrians-only system are minimal and the residents of the village have become accustomed to the circulation system. The main consequence of the closure is that all traffic must remain on Read Street to its intersection with Ballard. Only one single-family residence fronts on Read Street, and that residence is opposite the entrance to the Village Apartments where there is already evening traffic activity. It should also be noted that village residents understand that they can drive around the barricades if necessary to reach their property and that system has operated well since the inception of the closure program.

### **Recommendation**

I believe that an extension of the Main Street pedestrians-only designation to additional hours on certain days of the week would be beneficial not only to better accommodate the proposed walking tour operation but also to enhance the safety and enjoyment of residents and other visitors who may wish to walk along sections of Main Street in the evening hours.

Staff has discussed the possibility of extended hours with the Chairman of the Yorktown Village Landowner Group and he believes that the extension would be acceptable to village residents. Therefore, I recommend that the Board authorize an extension of the hours, as described above, subject to confirmation of the acceptance and approval of the Virginia Department of Transportation. Proposed Resolution No. R02-92 will accomplish this.

Carter/3337

### **Attachments**

?? Operations Plan Summary

?? Proposed Resolution No. R02-92